



from the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee
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EOC applauds SC's "A" rating for state's standards and accountability system on national report card

EDITOR'S NOTE: The complete Quality Counts 2004 report, including South Carolina data, is available on line at www.edweek.org. See EOC Members Quotes at the end of the news release.

South Carolina's standards and accountability system is among the best in the country, according to a national report card released today.

The eighth annual *Quality Counts 2004*, a report card on the state of school reform across the United States published by the national magazine *Education Week*, ranks SC's standards and accountability system with seven other states earning an A rating and cites the gains made from B rating in 2003.

Components of SC's education accountability system were cited as reasons for the A rating and include:

- "clear and specific" contents standards in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies for every grade level;
- standards-based tests using multiple choice, short answers, and extended response items aligned with it standards;
- annual school and district report cards that provide test results to the public; and
- assistance to low performing schools and rewards to high performing or high improving schools.

"The improvement of South Carolina's rating is a result of the combined efforts of educators, policy makers, and citizens who demand the best for our children," said Dr. Jo Anne Anderson, EOC executive director. "We should take today's successes and use them as a

foundation to address the challenges that are still before us. SC schools have the opportunity to lead the nation in serving all children.”

SC continued its top ranking for the second year in a row for its efforts to improve teacher quality earning the highest score in the country and an A- rating.

This year’s report also grades states on school climate, a category covering student absenteeism/tardiness, parental involvement, class and school sizes, choice and facilities. South Carolina improved from D+ in 2002 to a C+. SC is cited as being one of only seven states to include information on parent involvement, school safety, class size information on school report cards. SC also is one of 14 states that surveys students, parents and teachers about the condition of their schools and reports survey results on the school report card.

The report also gave each state letter grades on funding issues. SC earned a B- (down slightly from last year’s B) for adequacy and a C (up slightly a C- last year) for equity.

QUOTES FROM EOC MEMBERS:

“South Carolina’s economic future is dependent upon a quality educational system,” said EOC Chairman Bob Staton. “This rating validates our educational system as being on the right track for ensuring a bright future for our state’s children and our economic well-being.”

“The tremendous efforts of teachers, students, and parents are being recognized by this rating and it’s nice to be recognized,” said EOC Vice Chairman Alex Martin. “As educators, our focus is the students and we must continue to evaluate every aspect to ensure ALL students achieve – and achieve at high levels.”

“This rating shows we are moving in the right direction,” said Rep. Bobby Harrell, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. “It is important for us to stay the course.”

“There’s no question that this report gives credence to the fact that our state is where it should be,” said Rep. Bob Walker, chairman of the House Education (K-12) subcommittee. “Everyone needs to continue working together to move our state’s educational system forward.”